



# House Policy Committee

## *Policy Perspective*

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*Christopher Cox, Chairman*

### PRC Military Buildup Threatens Democracy on Taiwan

## **The Clinton-Gore Abandonment of America's Long-Standing Taiwan Policy**

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"China's general policy for settling the Taiwan issue remains 'peaceful reunification; one country, two systems.' However, we will never commit ourselves to renouncing the use of force."

*Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army, Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai, January 27, 2000*

There is a growing threat to peace across the Taiwan Strait: the massive, ongoing military buildup that the People's Republic of China is openly directing against democratic Taiwan. Three times in the last four years, in 1995, 1996, and 1999, the PRC has attempted blatant military coercion against Taiwan. Analysts across the political spectrum anticipate that the PRC could launch new military moves against Taiwan, in an attempt to intimidate participants in Taiwan's March 2000 democratic presidential elections. A Pentagon report released in February 1999 indicates that without U.S. assistance in defensive weaponry, the PRC could gain military advantages over Taiwan in key areas after 2005—just six years from now.

### ***Background: A Long-Standing U.S. Policy Against PRC Use of Force***

For almost fifty years, the United States has maintained its commitment to Taiwan's defensive military capabilities in order to deter PRC attack and keep peace in the Taiwan Strait—first by virtue of a U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty with Taipei, and since 1979 pursuant to the Taiwan Relations Act.

The Taiwan Relations Act, the legislative embodiment of America's long-standing Taiwan policy, declares that "any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by

other than peaceful means...[is] a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States,” and stipulates that the United States will “make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capacity.”

Section 3(b) of the Taiwan Relations Act further states “The President and the Congress shall determine the nature and quantity of such defense articles and services based solely on their judgment of the needs of Taiwan...”

U.S. presidents since Dwight Eisenhower have successfully deterred PRC attacks on Taiwan for half a century. An essential part of this policy, from Eisenhower to Bush, has been selling Taiwan the weapons it needs to defend itself against the PRC. As recently as 1992, President George Bush approved the sale of 150 F-16 fighter aircraft to Taiwan, despite Beijing’s vehement objections. However, the Clinton-Gore administration refuses to sell Taiwan the advanced weapons it needs to deter a new crisis. The Clinton-Gore administration also refuses to permit the kind of high-level military contacts with democratic Taiwan that it has recently initiated with the PRC’s People’s Liberation Army—even though such contacts with Taiwan would be helpful in deterring a crisis, and would be essential should one occur.

In the absence of presidential leadership, Congress must act now to strengthen communications between U.S. and Taiwan military forces, rebuild deterrence, and head off a new crisis in the Taiwan Strait.

### ***Growing PRC Military Threats to Taiwan***

Although it has a number of targets, including India, the Philippines, Japan, and other rivals in the Asia-Pacific region, the ongoing substantial increase in offensive forces by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is perhaps most directly threatening to Taiwan. The PRC is placing the greatest emphasis on new offensive missile forces, but is also rapidly building a more capable offense in both air and naval forces.

With a significant increase in the PLA’s regional offensive capability, the PRC’s Communist rulers will be more tempted to use military force against Taiwan. The major elements of the PRC’s increase in offensive military capabilities are:

- **An Escalating PRC Missile Threat Against Taiwan:** In 1995 and 1996, the PLA used missile firings in an attempt to coerce Taiwan’s voters during elections. Today, to compensate for weaknesses in its air force and navy, the PLA is building a complex of highly accurate ballistic and cruise missiles netted to space-based and airborne sensors. By the end of the decade the PRC could have up to 1,000 new ballistic and cruise missiles that could be used for massive saturation strikes against Taiwan’s air bases, naval bases and key government and economic infrastructure.
- **New PRC Short Range Ballistic Missiles Aimed at Taiwan:** A Pentagon report released in February 1999 in response to a Congressional mandate, according to published sources, reveals that the PLA has about 100 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) targeted on Taiwan and could build up to 650 SRBMs by 2005. These include the 360-mile range Dong Feng (“East Wind”) 15—which were fired toward Taiwan in 1995 and 1996. The PLA is also building one brigade of the 180-mile range M-11 missile, which carries a larger warhead than the DF-15. Both the East Wind and the M-11 are mobile missiles and thus especially

threatening offensive weapons, because they are nearly impossible for a defending force to neutralize. These new offensive systems are being made more effective with new highly accurate navigation systems based on the U.S. Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system and with new non-nuclear warheads. A stealthy warhead shape and novel two-stage design will make the DF-15 difficult to shoot down even for the Patriot anti-missile systems the U.S. has sold Taiwan.

- **New PRC Medium Range Missiles Will Target Taiwan:** The PLA is also building longer-range and more accurate versions of its 1,100-mile range East Wind-21 (DF-21) missile. The PLA is reported to be building either a radar or GPS-guided terminal warhead for the East Wind-21. Its high speed makes the East Wind-21 more difficult to intercept, and also makes it a candidate for deep-penetrating warheads designed to target Taiwan's underground military facilities.
- **New PRC Cruise Missiles Planned for Taiwan Targets:** The PLA is expected to deploy new, very accurate GPS-guided land-attack cruise missiles early in the decade. Future versions may be based on the C-802 turbojet powered anti-ship missile and could be launched from aircraft, ships, submarines and trucks.
- **PRC Development of Cruise Missiles Nears Completion:** According to Jane's Defense Weekly, PRC land-attack cruise missiles have been in development since the early 1990s and short-range (300 km) variants may already be in the PRC inventory.
- **New PRC Battle-Management Satellites Will Threaten Taiwan:** In November 1998 the PRC announced that it would launch a new satellite reconnaissance network comprised of four new imaging satellites and two new radar satellites—which can see through bad weather and find ships at sea. Information from these satellites will be combined with intelligence data from airborne radar and electronic intelligence aircraft to provide precise targeting data for missile, air and naval forces in any planned operations against Taiwan.
- **PRC Acquisition of Russia's GLONASS would increase PRC missile accuracy:** Recent reports indicate strong PRC interest in investing in Russia's GLONASS navigation network similar to the U.S. GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) network. Having control of GLONASS would help ensure guidance signals to PRC ballistic and cruise missiles to guarantee very high accuracy.
- **PRC Information Warfare Threats Against Taiwan:** During 1999, there have been an increasing number of incidents of cross-Strait computer attacks by the PRC. The PLA intends to use information attacks combined with massive missile attacks to sow chaos in Taiwan. The PLA is developing the means to attack Taiwan's information sources: these include long-range lasers that can disable satellites, and new air-launched missiles like the Russian Kh-31, designed to attack radar for the Patriot and *Aegis* anti-missile systems. The PLA is also investing heavily in computer network attack capabilities designed to disable or manipulate key military and civilian computer networks in Taiwan.
- **New PLA Combat Aircraft from Russia for Air Campaign Against Taiwan:** During 1999 there was also a sharp increase in PLA aircraft flying over the Taiwan Strait in an effort to intimidate Taiwan. After massive missile strikes against Taiwan's Air Force, the PLA hopes to secure control of the air with its new, more capable combat aircraft. In June the

PRC finalized a contract to purchase 50 to 70 Sukhoi Su-30 attack-fighters. These will be the PLA Air Force's first long-range all-weather attack aircraft capable of delivering precision-guided bombs and missiles. The Su-30 is based on the Su-27 *Flanker*, of which about 200 are now being co-produced in the PRC. The Su-27 and the Su-30 could in the future be armed with the Russian AA-12 self-guided medium-range anti-aircraft missile, which is as capable as the U.S. AIM-120 AMRAAM. PLA Air Force fighter and strike aircraft will be coordinated by new airborne radar and control (AWACS) aircraft being built in Russia.

- **New PRC Naval Forces to Blockade the Taiwan Strait:** Massive missile strikes against Taiwan's Navy will also allow more modern PLA Navy ships now entering service to better undertake blockade maneuvers around Taiwan. Late last year the PLA Navy received the last of four new Russian *Kilo* conventionally powered attack submarines. The PLA is developing its new *Song*-class conventional submarine and its new *Type-093* nuclear-powered attack submarine. All of these submarines will eventually be armed with new land-attack cruise missiles. Within days the PLA Navy will acquire the first of two new Russian *Sovremenniy* missile destroyers armed with the supersonic SS-N-22 *Sunburn* anti-ship missile—a weapon specifically designed to destroy U.S. warships. The PRC Navy may buy two to three more. Recent reports indicate that Russia is trying to sell the PRC advanced *Akula* nuclear-powered attack submarines and technology for new, large aircraft carriers.

### ***The Taiwan Security Enhancement Act: Keeping America's Commitment to Taiwan's Self-Defense***

Today, even more than in 1979, Taiwan's security is critical to America's interests. Taiwan is now America's seventh largest trading partner, and buys far more from the U.S. than does the PRC. The sea-lanes surrounding Taiwan are vital to the economic health of Asia and to the sustained growth of U.S. exports to Asia. Perhaps most important of all, a democratic Taiwan stands as a living example to all of the people of China that they too can build a prosperous, peaceful democracy. The Clinton-Gore administration has repeatedly rejected Taiwan's requests for essential defensive weapons—including *Aegis* naval-based air-defense radar.

The Clinton-Gore administration's refusal to sell Taiwan the defensive weapons it requires to defend against the PLA is creating a growing military imbalance, violating both the letter and the spirit of the Taiwan Relations Act, and ironically increasing the risk that the PRC will mistake U.S. intentions and attack Taiwan.

The *Taiwan Security Enhancement Act* now under consideration in the Senate and the House seeks to fill this presidential leadership vacuum by maintaining the long-standing U.S. commitment to provide Taiwan with the defensive military strength it needs to deter the PRC. The Act calls for:

- **Ensuring that US-Taiwan military ties are at least as close as US-PLA ties.** The State Department currently bars senior U.S. military officers from meeting their Taiwan counterparts, and consequently Taiwan is not aware of the latest U.S. developments in doctrine and tactics. Meanwhile, enhanced contacts between U.S. and PLA officers of all ranks have been a priority for the Clinton-Gore administration: all U.S. generals and admirals are allowed to visit their counterparts in the PRC. The Taiwan Security

Enhancement Act provides that our field-rank officers can have the same level of relations with a friendly, defensive force as they currently have with the PLA.

- **Increase transparency of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.** The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act states, “The President and the Congress shall determine the nature and quantity of such defense articles and services based solely upon their judgment of the needs of Taiwan,” but successive administrations have not consistently consulted the Congress. The TSEA therefore calls for annual reporting to the Congress on annual arms sales to Taiwan, which will go far to fulfill this requirement of the Taiwan Relations Act.

## ***Conclusion***

The long-standing U.S. policy toward Taiwan has helped maintain peace in the Strait for half a century. The Clinton-Gore administration’s dangerous weakening of the policy requires Congressional action. Both sound judgment and the Taiwan Relations Act itself counsel promoting Taiwan’s democracy with defensive weapons and opening up military exchanges between the U.S. and Taiwan to the same extent as existing contacts with the PRC.

The Clinton-Gore administration’s backsliding on long-standing U.S.-Taiwan policy is concededly designed to placate Beijing at Taiwan’s expense. Ironically, however, it is only serving to embolden Beijing’s Communist rulers, whose increasingly threatening rhetoric risks a catastrophic rupture in U.S. relations with the PRC. The U.S. must neither allow Beijing to establish near-term military supremacy over Taiwan nor encourage Beijing to believe that the United States will acquiesce in PRC military coercion of Taiwan.

Congress must act swiftly to make clear that the United States will continue its longstanding commitment to maintaining the military balance across the Taiwan Strait, and take the steps necessary to enhance America’s security relationship with democratic Taiwan.

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## PRC MISSILES REVEALED IN THE OCTOBER 1, 1999 PARADE COMMEMORATING THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF COMMUNIST RULE IN CHINA



DF-15 SRBM  
RANGE: 360 MILES  
MISSION: TARGET TAIWAN



DF-21 MRBM  
RANGE: 1,100 MILES  
MISSION: TARGET TAIWAN; PREVENT U.S. SUPPORT FOR TAIWAN



DF-31 ICBM  
RANGE: 5,500 MILES  
MISSION: TARGET U.S.; PREVENT U.S. SUPPORT FOR TAIWAN